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To: MLPACComments
Subject: The MPA Process

The MPA process, I have found, is a candy coated land grab being made by certain idealists. While pretending to be responsive to user groups, the idealists have actually pitted these groups against one another. The groups are fighting for what is left while the idealists have claimed the most bio-diverse areas for themselves and their research. During the process kayakers fought against fisherman, sport fisher against commercial, eco-diver against spear fisher, jet skier against birder. At the end of every meeting the Blue Ribbon Task Force would congratulate themselves on having "worked" with the fisherman, and it seemed the fisherman were actually the ones who were losing the most, if you value a fishing heritage and a five hundred year long legacy taught from father to son.

It seemed odd that, at one of the first meeting long ago, I looked around at the Blue Ribbon Task Force, and noticed that on each members desk a brand new Hewlett Packard computer. Coincidental?
Private funding? Could hard working fishing folk be held on an equal intellectual level by the scientists toting this technology? The mediator at many meetings looked suspiciously like Al Gore, and chose members of the scientific community armed with informative charts, graphs and pretty underwater photos over fisherman who were allowed to speak only at the ends of these elaborate presentations. No, we were not part of this process and do not be deceived by a couple of traitors. We pleaded that fishing laws are now tougher than ever and that there were issues so important that all of this focus should have been aimed at these issues and not at sustainable fisherman.

These issues were: 1) Pollution such as oil spills and oil spill preparedness. 2) Agricultural pollutants and their effects on ground water and nitrogen discharges near shore causing Red tides. 3) The effects of climate changes on our sanctuary, (Thank you Al Gore). 4) Invasive species coming in through ships holds in their bilges.

The MLPA process claims to have taken only a small percentage of the resources, yet by using side scanning sonar, have grabbed ninety percent of the reef structure in Monterey Bay. These spots are Ano Nuevo, Portuguese Ledge and Soquel Canyon. Did they plan on refunding our license fees or paying our rent? Congratulations on the science.

As a thirty year fisherman, I can honestly say that they have searched out, found and closed the areas of this bay which have the highest concentrations of fish that fishermen and women relied on to make a living.

Do I want your sympathy? No, in fact I am amazed at your systematic ability to trample the constitutional rights of the fisherman of the North Pacific. There could be people in this process who wish we were dead and there are fisherman past who must be rolling over in their graves at these issues. You are taking away our freedom to roam the seas, and our futures and replacing them with EIS systems which track us all like animals. For many you will extinguish a way of life. I can only assume that now, in Federal waters, you will grab the next large areas of upwelling and unbelievable productivity and marine diversity, the sea mounts.

All of this protection against "take", will draw money away from preparation for the next huge oil spill. The oil from the Costco Busam will never be "cleaned up" and its effects will be around for years. Ironically it was the fishermen who were called upon to respond to this clean up effort.

In Conclusion, I give the MPA process an "F" for forging ahead with short sightedness and wasting tons of tax payer money. I personally have to travel two and a half extra hours through a No Take Zone to fish, an unnecessary waste of four gallons of fuel each time I go fishing. This creates more Greenhouse gasses.

People of the North Coast! I've read some of your e-mails about MPA's. You are falling into the same trap we fell into, suggesting that they close one ab-divers spot over another.... or for your safety. These people do not care about you! Ab divers, fishermen, both recreational and commercial, spear fishermen,

urchin divers, kayakers, anyone who wants to pick up a seashell... you had better make a united front, because you are about to be relieved of your constitutional right to enjoy a public resource. Use your media connections to make a resistance to this Ocean grab by a group of Sea Lion cuddling zealots. I have lost countless fishing days attending these meetings. As stake holders we got no where. It is hard to fight large amounts of private money. So, be aware of this and do not allow them to divide and conquer. If you want to read an e-mail which to me sounds suspiciously professional and coerced, read the Patricia King Letter. They always include one of these suspiciously supportive and congratulatory letters because in reality it is just the scientists against the public. While we lose our jobs and infra structure, they gain jobs in research and science based studies, which many locals will not qualify for. Fight for your right to fish!

Sincerely, A Central Coast Fisherman